

Volcanic Ash Guidance ceases from Met Office as Iceland Volcano remains 'paused'

Description

Latest information received from the Icelandic Meteorological Office indicate that the volcanic activity in Iceland has paused.

As a result of this lower activity, UK airspace is not expected to be affected by any further ash cloud and the Met Office will no longer issue Volcanic Ash Guidance from the VAAC.

Volcanologists and Geologists term this quieter spell of volcanic activity as a "paused" phase. However, it is typical for a volcano like this to have several "pauses" as part of its overall eruption phase. Only when the volcano has been "paused" for three months will it then be regarded as being dormant.

Although no ash cloud is being emitted at the moment, while any volcanic activity continues the Met Office will continue to monitor the situation.

Date Created

May 2011

Spring rainfall shows big contrasts across the UK

Description

Provisional Met Office climate figures for spring 2011 indicate that rainfall amounts across the UK have varied widely from north and west to south and east.

Even though further rain is expected across much of the country before the season ends, parts of the east and south are likely to be heading towards their driest spring on record. These records date back more than 100 years to 1910.

For statistical purposes, the meteorological spring is the combined months of March, April and May and provisional figures are from 1 March to 25 May.

The driest region has been East Anglia, where rainfall amounts show that only 17mm of rain has fallen, just 13% of the long term spring average which is 134.9mm.

However, at the opposite of the country, parts of north and west Scotland have had a wet season, with Argyll recording 538.6mm of rain, well above the long term average of 422.0mm.

This table shows rainfall figures for Spring across the UK. *All figures are provisional up to 25th May 2011.*

Location	Actual (mm) 1 March to 25 May	Percentage of 1971 to 2000 average	Long term spring average (mm)
UK	164.9 mm	71 %	231.7 mm
England	65.4 mm	36 %	179.4 mm
Northern Ireland	180.6 mm	78 %	232.2 mm
Scotland	336.3 mm	111 %	304.1 mm
Wales	128.6 mm	45 %	285.4 mm

This map shows rainfall figures for Spring across the UK as a percentage of the 1971-2000 long term average. *All figures are provisional up to 25th May 2011.*

Map showing UK rainfall as a percentage of the 1971-2000 long-term average

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The big differences in rainfall pattern across the UK, illustrate just how varied the weather can be over the country. 'Blocked' weather patterns have kept many southern and eastern counties dry but Atlantic weather systems and their rain-bearing fronts have affected regions further north and west.

Spring featured high temperatures especially during April, helping to make it one of the warmest springs on record. However, with several more days to go we need to wait until next week to see if it becomes a record-breaker.

Across the UK, the Bank Holiday [weather forecast](#) looks set to offer rather changeable conditions, with a mixture of bright or sunny spells but also some rain or showers at times.

Date Created

May 2011

Met Office issues Atlantic tropical storm forecast for the 2011 season

Description

Our [forecast](#) for this year's North Atlantic tropical storm season states it is likely to be quieter than 2010, with **[13 tropical storms between June and November 2011](#)**, with a 70% chance that the number will be in the range 10 to 17.

This is very close to the 1980-2010 long-term average of 12, and is in contrast to 2010 which had a total of 19 tropical storms.

[Tropical storm frequency forecast. June to November 2011](#)

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Tropical storm frequency forecast. June to November 2011

The most likely **Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) index – a measure of the storm lifetimes and intensities as well as total numbers over a season – is 151**, with a 70% chance that the index will be in the range 89 to 212: well above the 1980-2010 average of 104.

Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) Index. forecast June to November 2011

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Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) Index forecast . June to November 2011

For the past four years, the Met Office forecast has given accurate guidance of Atlantic tropical cyclone activity, identifying the relatively quiet seasons of 2007 and 2009 from the active seasons of 2008 and 2010.

Matt Huddleston, Principal Consultant on climate change at the Met Office said: “North Atlantic tropical storms affect all of us through fluctuating oil, food and insurance markets. Seasonal and multi-year forecasts are the focus for key research at the Met Office and the benefits of that are being realised through the increasing accuracy of its predictions”.

This is the second year of operation of the Met Office’s new seasonal prediction system called [GloSea4](#) . The new generation model has better representation of the complex physical processes that cause tropical storms and hurricanes to form, thus improving the accuracy of the forecast. The forecast also uses information from the seasonal prediction system of the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts.

One of the key indicators for a tropical storm season is the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), which affects sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific and, remotely, conditions in the North Atlantic. It’s therefore vital to be able to accurately predict the ENSO cycle and GloSea4 has shown good skill in such predictions.

Date Created
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Met Office in the Media: 26th May 2011

Description

Our scientists and forecasters have been at the centre of providing advice to the aviation, industry and government over the last week in support of the eruption of the Grimsvotn eruption in Iceland this week. Following ash across the UK we continue to see an improving picture as we head toward the Bank Holiday weekend.

This was covered on the [BBC Ten O'Clock News](#) last night as flights resumed across the UK, highlighting the latest ash cloud forecast outlook charts. The [Daily Express](#) and [The Sun](#) have also both reported on the clearance of ash. The Daily Mail reported that '[Half term is on again](#)' after yesterday reporting that there was likely to be widespread disruption into the weekend. However we had previously made it very clear that beyond 24 hours the situation becomes more uncertain as it is difficult for the Iceland Meteorological Office to know how the volcano will behave. Weather patterns also become more variable leading to a dynamic situation. Both these facts mean that longer range charts have less confidence than short range output and this should be considered when they are used. Following the volcano stopping to erupt and more observational data being gathered on ash emitted at the beginning of the eruption, ash concentrations over the UK on Friday and into the weekend are likely to be at levels that, according to the CAA, are not prohibitive to flying safely.

Finally, Steve Connor in the Independent has written an article '[The real danger to air passengers is not the ash cloud – it's these men](#)'. The article looks at the danger volcanic ash poses to aircraft and the work of the CAA and Met Office in ensuring that airlines can operate safely, highlighting the 'plethora of scientific instruments, from optical sensing machines on the ground to satellites in space' used to identify whereabouts of the ash.

Date Created

May 2011

“Heatwave” newspaper reports not from Met Office

Description

A couple of weeks ago several daily newspapers reported that we were likely to see a heatwave through the last two weeks of May. In fact one newspaper reported that we were likely to see temperatures of 88 °F (or 31 °C) on its front page. This has recently led to some to comment about what has happened to the “heatwave”

These forecasts were based on comments from Positive Weather Solutions, NetWeather and other forecasters. At no time did the Met Office say that we were likely to see a heat wave in the last two weeks of May. The longer term 6-15 day forecast issued on the Met Office website on the 16th May for the period up to the end of the month said:

Occasional rain or showers are likely in the north and west this weekend, with weakening rainbands occasionally straying further south, whilst the southeast stays mainly fine. Temperatures exhibit a similar split, with the north and west rather cool (and windy), whilst the south and east sees above-average daytime temperatures, and light winds. Into the new week, heavy, even thundery showers may develop in parts of England and Wales, but sunny periods are also likely, and it may well stay warm here. The northwest should be cooler, with Northern Ireland and particularly northwestern Scotland seeing further rain or showers, but also some brighter interludes. Later in the week and following weekend, there are some indications that more unsettled conditions will become more commonplace, though there is considerable uncertainty.

Met Office weather forecasts for the next five days, 6 to 15 days ahead and 16 to 30 days ahead are available on the Met Office website.

Date Created

May 2011

Grímsvötn ash cloud – better news for the Bank Holiday

Description

Latest information received from the Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO) indicates that the Grímsvötn volcano is no longer emitting ash, and only minor steam plumes from the crater up to around 300 metres. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS), the volcano is still active with on-going low level seismic activity reported, even though this has decreased.

[Our advice for today](#) is that the ash has now moved away from the UK toward the continent. Further ahead, Met Office latest volcanic ash cloud advice is that we continue to be in an improving situation and it seems likely that there will only be minimal ash over the UK and Europe as we enter the Bank Holiday weekend. CAA and NATS together with the individual airlines can advise how this improving picture will affect flights.

The [movement of the ash cloud](#) will depend on whether we see any further volcanic eruptions and how weather patterns develop. The Met Office London VAAC continues to provide forecast guidance up to 24 hours ahead to support decision-making.

Met Office volcanic ash cloud advice is based on a combination of model output, satellite data and other information from radar, lidar and aircraft. Model information is validated using this observational data and is routinely modified to provide the best advice possible.

Date Created

May 2011

Grimsvötn Volcano Latest

Description

Latest information received from the Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO) indicates that the Grimsvötn volcano is no longer emitting ash, only minor steam plumes from the crater up to 300 meters.

According to the British Geological Survey (BGS), the volcano is still active with on-going low level seismic activity reported, even though this has decreased. This means it is still possible that further ash emissions may occur at anytime.

As a result, the UK Met Office will continue to receive information from the IMO and BGS on whether the eruption may – or may not – continue.

Date Created

May 2011

Ash observations confirm Met Office ash forecasts

Description

The Grímsvötn volcano continues to eject ash according to latest information from colleagues in the Iceland [Met Office](#) and British Geological Survey. As the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre for the northwest Europe region, the Met Office uses this information to provide guidance on the movement of the ash plume.

[Ash reports](#) today across northern Scotland confirm Met Office ash forecasts issued on Monday. Latest observations include:

- Satellite and Lidar observations confirm the presence of ash over northern Britain in the last 24 hours.
- A plane flying from Aberdeen to the Shetlands encountered volcanic ash during the flight with ash being deposited on the aircraft.
- This morning ash deposits were found on a plane that had be flying in the Orkney area.
- A plane flying from Stansted to Belfast observed a layer of ash to the north /northwest of the flight path.
- A plane flying at a height of 18,000 feet in the Manchester area around 2pm today has observed a layer of ash of approximately 1000-2000 feet thick.
- The research ship Discovery entered an area of thick volcanic ash on Monday between Scotland and Iceland with ash being deposited onboard.
- Professional observers have reported ash being deposited in northern Britain.
- Ash has been deposited on vehicles on Orkney.
- Air quality sensors across Scotland have indicated an increased amount of ash particles (PM10s) during today and more information is available from the [DEFRA](#) website.

The movement of the ash plume will depend on how long the volcano continues to erupt and how weather patterns develop. The Met Office London Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre (VAAC) continues to provide forecast guidance up to 24 hours ahead to support decision-making. This guidance is provided to the Civil Aviation Authority as the lead agency, NATS, airports and airline operators in order to support their decisions on whether aircraft can fly safely.

The ash is predicted to clear northern parts of the UK by early Wednesday. How this affects flight routing decisions would be determined by CAA and NATS together with the individual airlines. [Met Office forecasts](#) for the end of this week indicate mainly low levels of ash affecting parts of UK and Europe. This forecast does depend on the status of the Volcano since the wind direction and strength will remain variable. You should stay up to date with the latest advice from the Met Office. How this affects flight routing decisions would be determined by CAA and NATS together with the individual airlines.

Date Created

May 2011

'Significant eruption' of Grimsvotn likely to bring ash to UK

Description

The British Geological Survey (BGS) have described the eruption of Grimsvötn that began over the weekend as 'a significant eruption' and the IMO have reported ash continuing to be ejected to a height of 10km.

As the Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre for the northwest Europe region the Met Office is receiving information from colleagues in the Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO) and the British Geological Survey (BGS) to monitor the eruption. The Met Office uses this to provide guidance on the movement of the ash plume.

The movement of the ash plume will depend on how long the volcano continues to erupt and how weather patterns develop. The Met Office London Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre (VAAC) continues to provide forecast guidance up to 24 hours ahead to support decision making. This guidance is provided to the [CAA](#) as the lead agency, NATS, airport and airline operators in order to support them in decisions on whether aircraft can fly safely.

Currently the [Met Office forecasts](#) that ash is likely to reach parts of northern and western Scotland overnight tonight and into tomorrow morning. How this affects flight routing decisions would be determined by CAA and NATS together with the individual airlines.

Further ahead, the outlook is very changeable with areas of low pressure likely to track across parts of northern Britain during the remainder of the week. The means that wind direction is likely to be quite variable and you should stay up to date with the latest advice from the Met Office.

The Met Office London VAAC uses a range of technologies to predict the movement of volcanic ash including computer models, satellite imagery and observations from Radar, Lidar and aircraft.

The Met Office dispersion model forecasts are routinely validated and verified against all available observations, such as from Satellite, Radar, Lidar and aircraft. For example, a weather balloon that can sample ash concentrations will be launched in western Scotland in the next 24 hours and we are working with airlines and others to undertake airborne measurements.

The Met Office is not responsible for decisions relating to UK airspace. Any enquiries relating to this should be passed to [NATS](#) or [CAA](#).

The [Met Office website](#) has more information on where ash is predicted to be in the next 24 hours, recent observations and other Q&A.

Date Created

May 2011

Pollen forecasts bring help to Hay Fever sufferers

Description



Different types of pollen are released throughout the year which can generate hay fever and other allergies. These symptoms can have a serious impact on the well-being of some people.

Pollen season

The pollen count season is normally March to August. However, it can start as early as January and end as late as November.

The pollen season separates into three main sections:

1. Tree pollen – late March to mid-May.
2. Grass pollen – mid-May to July.
3. Weed pollen – end of June to September

Our [pollen calendar](#) has a detailed breakdown of the different types of pollen and their peak times within a season. However this year many sufferers are experiencing symptoms earlier than normal due to the fine and warm weather being experienced across the UK right now.

How can the Met Office help?

We manage the only pollen count monitoring network in the UK and produce pollen forecasts up to five days ahead. We use information from our network, our weather data and expertise from organisations such as the [National Pollen and Aerobiological Unit](#) at the University of Worcester to produce forecasts which are designed to help support allergy and [Hay fever](#) sufferers through the most difficult time of the year.

Pollen forecasts

We provide free, public UK pollen forecasts on the [Invent](#) section of our website. Just visit the [Weather Map](#) page and select the pollen count information.

- Two-day pollen forecast, updated daily.
- Three-day pollen forecast, updated daily.
- Five-day pollen forecast, updated daily.
- Monthly forecast, updated weekly.

These can be offered for our 16 weather forecasting regions. We can also offer a summary of the previous season and a seasonal outlook for the upcoming pollen count season. We can also provide pollen forecast information for display on your website or through other media channels.

Related articles

- [Met Office comes to the rescue as hay-fever sufferers wilt in heat](#) (independent.co.uk)

Date Created

May 2011

Met Office welcomes findings of Transport Select Committee

Description

The Met Office welcomes the findings of the Transport Select Committee and its acknowledgement of the quality of our short range forecasts provided during [November and December of last year](#).

The Transport Select Committee has also recommended additional funding for the Met Office of £10m over four years. This would go towards providing advice on possible UK weather impacts for transport and other sectors in the coming decades, that could bring significant benefits to those managing and planning major infrastructure projects for the future.

The additional funds would be used, in partnership with the [UK academic community](#), to enable fundamental research on the drivers of future changes in UK hazardous weather and climate extremes to be conducted.

Related articles

- [Met Office Government Services Director on BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme](#) (bbc.co.uk)
- [Snow report urges Met Office cash](#) (independent.co.uk)

Date Created

May 2011

Met Office in the Media: 09 May 2011

Description

A story about the forecast for the **Royal Wedding** provided by the Met Office was published by the [Sunday Express](#) this weekend. The story, however, fails to accurately review the forecast that was actually provided for the wedding, and as a result is misleading.

Our forecasts were used by millions of people in London and across the country to help celebrate the big day, providing accurate information on sunny spells developing and the small risk of showers.

Reviewing the forecast we issued, it highlighted a very small risk of showers first thing followed by sunny spells developing through the morning. There was then the risk of further showers in the afternoon. It is possible to review this forecast in a News Release issued on the Thursday before the wedding.

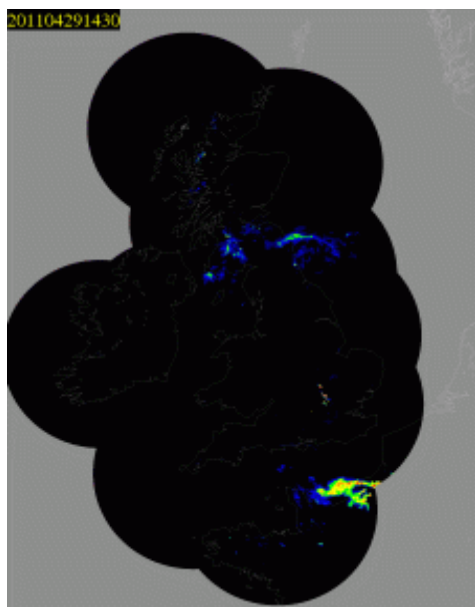
Looking back at the weather for the day then there were, as forecast, some showers first thing across parts of north and west London. These then cleared to allow sunny spells to develop. Further showers, some of these heavy, then developed in the afternoon.

This maps below show radar rainfall maps for the 29th April. The first the rainfall radar at 1030 BST (0930 GMT). It clearly shows showers to the north and west of London as well as showers across parts of northern England and Western Scotland. The second shows the rainfall radar at 1530 BST (1430 GMT). Showers, some heavy (indicated by the brighter colours) have broken out to the north of London again and moved west to other parts of England. Further showers affect parts of northern England and southern Scotland.



UK Rainfall Radar Image (29)

April 1030 BST)



UK Rainfall Radar Image (29
April 1530 BST)

As predicted **the ‘Spanish Plume’** widely talked about last week, brought warm conditions across the UK. Heavy thunderstorms were reported on both Friday and Saturday. Many newspapers, including the [Daily Mail](#) reported on the welcome rain over the weekend.

Lastly the Sunday Telegraph reports on a new book that is to be published exploring [the hidden beauty of clouds](#) taken by satellites. The new book titled **Weather Wonders** will be published later this month in conjunction with the Met Office.

Date Created

May 2011

What is a 'Spanish Plume'?

Description

There has been a lot of talk about warm weather expected across parts of England again this weekend. Temperatures are [forecast](#) to reach the mid to high 20's C on Friday and into the weekend, bringing the risk of thundery showers for some. It has been reported that a 'Spanish Plume' is responsible for this. Here, Ewen McCallum, Met Office Chief Meteorologist explains what a 'Spanish Plume' is?

'Spanish Plume' is actually a rather catchy name for a rather complex meteorological phenomenon which leads to warm conditions and heavy showers or thunderstorms over parts of the UK and north-west Europe.

As the name suggests it is a plume of very warm air that pushes north from the Spanish plateau and reaches the British Isles on a southerly airflow. Of course over the UK we are normally affected by much cooler Atlantic air as cold fronts encroach from the west. Now when these two air masses meet, the very warm 'plume' air is forced to rise vigorously over the cooler Atlantic air and as a result produces thunderstorms. Because these features can cover large areas the storms are often grouped together and can give widespread, heavy rainfall, often accompanied by hail.

Date Created

May 2011

Met Office in the Media: 04 May 2011

Description

There has been widespread coverage of the April climate statistics following what has been the [warmest and 11th driest April on record](#). The Met Office appeared on the [BBC One, Six and Ten O'Clock News](#) as well as the News Channel, BBC Radio Four 6 O'Clock News and the ITV News. The effects of the dry and warm weather have been felt in some areas with many news channels reporting on the heathland and moorland fires in the UK and on the impacts of the fine weather on farming.

The Met Office is working closely with the Environment Agency and water companies regarding water resources and is also working with the National Farmers Union on the current spell of dry weather, its impacts and the weather in the coming weeks.

The Met Office is also working closely with a number of Fire and Rescue services across the UK, helping them with [forecasts of wind and weather](#) to support their continued efforts of bringing the wildfires under control. Breezy weather over the last few days has hampered efforts, but winds are now gradually easing and this will help the firefighters in their efforts.

The impacts of weather have been recorded in business as well with [Thornton's](#) reporting that the fine weather has negatively affected business, while conversely the fine spring weather has boosted sales at [Next](#). The weather is known to impact retail business and the Met Office offers a range of services to support the [retail sector manage the weather](#).

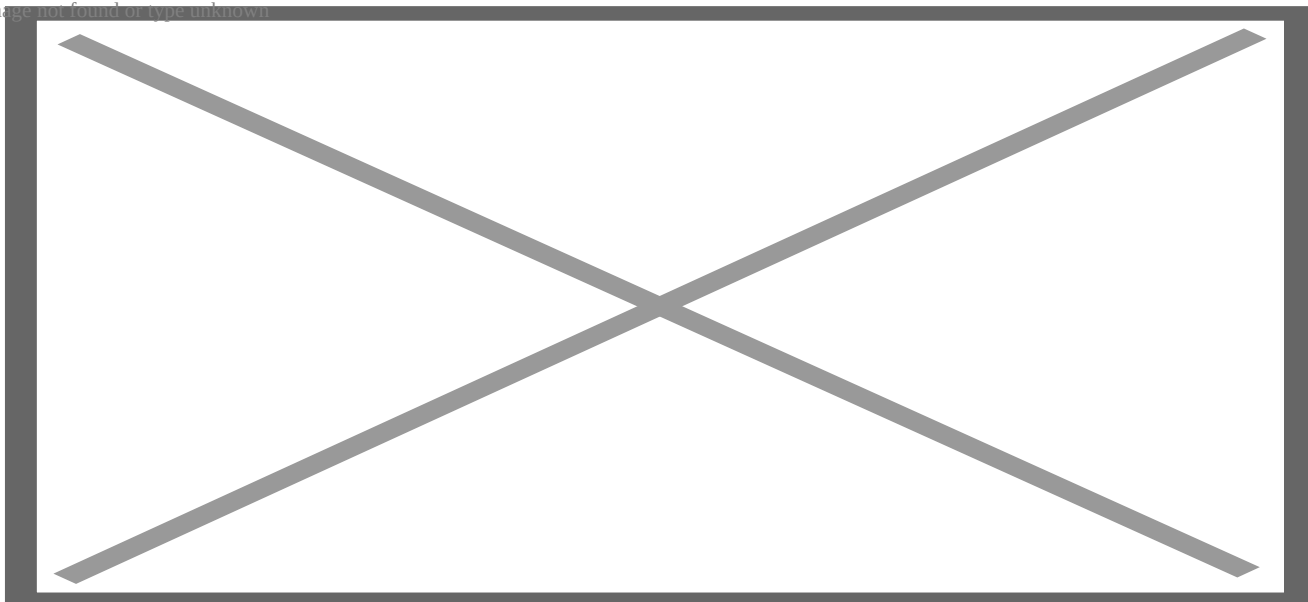
Date Created

May 2011

Met Office teams up with t-shirt manufacturer

Description

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The Met Office has teamed up with Rapanui, an eco-fashion company, to create a range of weather related T-shirts just in time for summer.

The Met Office eco clothing collection is made from organic cotton in an ethical, wind powered factory and features a range of weather related designs inspired by the imagery, science and history of the Met Office.

Mart Drake-Knight co-founder of Rapanui said:

“The Met Office is the international authority on climate change research, as well as being our national weather service that provides weather forecasts that we can trust and rely on.”

“At Rapanui we think that it’s not that people don’t care about climate and the environment, it’s just that they don’t know where to start when it comes to organic, ethical or low carbon alternatives. Our brand is about making eco fashion cool and accessible. We were delighted when we were invited to design these Met Office t-shirts. I think as well as being a nod to the Met Office’s heritage and expertise , we managed to add a bit of ‘Britishness’ and humour to capture the spirit of ‘the weather’ as a subject.”

The collaboration was designed to bring new audiences to the Met Office.

Luke Green from the Met Office said:

“Weather fascinates everybody and these t-shirts provide a fun way of reaching new audiences about the work the Met Office does. The collaboration with Rapanui to design and produce these t-shirts is hopefully the first step in developing new partnerships to promote our brand.”

T-shirts are available online via the Rapanui website www.rapanuiclothing.com/metoffice

Date Created

May 2011

Warm and dry April recorded

Description

Provisional Met Office climate figures for April 2011 indicate that the month is the warmest on record with many parts of the UK seeing temperatures 3 to 5 °C warmer than normal. The month is also the 11th driest April in the UK. These records go back more than 100 years, to 1910.

The UK average temperature was 10.7 °C exceeding the previous warmest April on record of 10.2 °C in 2007.

The warm weather was also accompanied by mainly dry conditions through the month. The UK average rainfall total was 36.7mm – 52% of the long-term average.

However rainfall amounts have varied quite widely across the UK, with parts of North and West Scotland seeing around 110% of normal April rainfall, while parts of South and East England have seen less than 10% of normal.

The dry April for many follows a dry March when less than half of the normal rainfall fell across the UK, also followed by a drier than average winter.

The dry weather this April has been largely caused by 'blocked' weather patterns across the UK. This weather pattern has prevented the usual run of westerly winds off the Atlantic Ocean, which bring rain bearing fronts.

	Average temperature for April		Average rainfall for April	
	Actual (°C)	Difference from 1971 to 2000 average (°C)	Actual (mm)	Percentage of 1971 to 2000 average
UK	10.7 °C	3.7 °C	36.7 mm	53%
England	11.6 °C	4.0 °C	11.5 mm	20%
Northern Ireland	10.7 °C	3.5 °C	35.0 mm	50%
Scotland	9.1 °C	3.4 °C	81.0 mm	94%
Wales	10.9 °C	3.7 °C	28.3 mm	33%

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